Christian baptism.

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CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

CHAPTER I.

THE CASE STATED.

IN the process of time interest has greatly waned in the doctrinal questions that formerly agitated christendom, and with many persons the distinction between Protestants now consists mainly in the mode of baptism. Some maintain that immersion only is baptism; others that sprinkling or pouring is the proper mode. Much has been written on this subject; but, as it is purely a question of evidence, some light may be thrown on it by considering it under the rules applied in judicial proceedings in the decision of similar controversies. To do this intelligently we must in advance determine the following questions:

1. *What is the precise point at issue?* Immersionists hold that the person must be plunged under the water so as to be en-

veloped in it; that the essential idea of the ordinance is burial in the water, and that it symbolizes the burial and resurrection of Christ. Pedobaptists maintain that the water should be applied to the person; that the essential idea of the ordinance is cleansing, and that it symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no distinction between pouring and sprinkling; sprinkling is only a mode of pouring, both are included in the term affusion; in both, the water is applied to the person to signify cleansing; and when the water was used as originally with a bunch of hyssop, either term was appropriate. So, however much water may be poured on a man, immersionists say he is not baptized unless at some one moment all his person is enveloped in it.

The question then is: Was Christian baptism primarily by the burial of the person in the water, or by the application of the water to the person? But as it is incredible that the apostles departed from the mode the Master followed, the question may be narrowed to this: How was Christ baptized? Was his person plunged under the water so

as to be buried in it, or did the water descend on him by affusion?

This being the point at issue, the next question to be decided is:

2. *By what evidence shall the issue be determined?* Immersionists rely much on matters outside of the Bible; a large part of their arguments is usually based on the supposed early usage of the church and on quotations from certain pedobaptists; but Presbyterians give little weight to such arguments. They insist that the Scriptures are the only rule for Christian guidance, and are not to be controlled by human traditions. The evidence of the usage of the church prior to the third century is against immersion, and no weight can be given to a practice so superstitious and so plainly corrupted as the baptism of that day. Even less weight can be given to the quotations from this or that pedobaptist. Most of them are misleading, and, as in the case of Luther and Calvin, misrepresent the writer's real position; and even when correct, they prove nothing, for ninety-seven per cent. of the Christian world are pedobaptists, and in this large majority, though

all in the main have agreed, there have always been differences of opinion on some points in this controversy, but no greater than on many matters fairly regarded as settled.

It cannot be intended by our Lord that his kingdom shall be governed by any such uncertain standard. He gave us his written word to prevent our following such guides, and he will hold us responsible, like his servants of old, if we, like them, make it of none effect through the traditions of the elders. Supposed early usage and misapplied sayings of good men were ever the plea under which the corruptions of the past crept into the church. It is the boast of the Scriptures that they tell the way of salvation so plainly that the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein (Isa. xxxv. 8); and it cannot be necessary for us to go beyond them to know our Master's will. An open Bible needs not human traditions as its interpreter, and is of itself our only guide in matters of faith and practice. For if we add to "the book" where shall we stop, and what shall be our guide?

Conceding that the issue shall be determined by the Scriptures, and by them alone, our remaining question is:

3. *By what rules shall the evidence be examined, and its weight ascertained?* As the whole question turns on the meaning of the Scriptures, it will be fair to use in determining it those rules of law adopted by the courts for determining the proper construction of other documents; for the real meaning of the Scriptures should be obtained just like the real meaning of any other document. These rules have been framed by men of exceptional ability and life-long experience in the impartial determination of such matters, and they have been confirmed by successive generations as the best means of arriving at the true meaning of a writing, until their fairness is no longer open to discussion. Among these rules are the following:

(1), Absolute certainty is not required; what is most reasonable is accepted.

(2), Words are read in the light of the circumstances of the parties; effect is given to the sense in which they are used by the writer; inferences not in his mind are disregarded.

(3), The meaning of a writing is determined, not from isolated phrases, but from the whole instrument and its general purpose.

In all our dealings we act on probabilities. The truth of Christianity rests on this sort of proof. Words are often used in one sense and understood in another, but a train of circumstances when sufficiently established is the strongest evidence known. In construing a document the courts read it according to the sense, not the words; and when they consider the words, they look less to their strict significance than to the meaning in which the writer actually used them.

These principles are peculiarly applicable to the construction of the Bible, for its truths are not stated in exact terms in a single passage, but here a little and there a little, from this standpoint and that, so that its real meaning on any subject must be learned by consulting many different passages, facts, and circumstances. Infinite wisdom thus framed revelation to promote the study of his word, to make us follow the spirit, not the mere form, and to guard against the shifting meaning of words in a revelation intended

for all times and all people. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16); and God has made us "ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.)

To determine, then, from the Scriptures whether in our Lord's baptism his person was buried in the water, or the water descended on him by affusion, let us examine separately the evidence for immersion and affusion, and then sum up the evidence on both sides under these principles.

CHAPTER II.

THE EVIDENCE FOR IMMERSION.

THERE is no direct Scripture evidence for immersion. Some years ago a pedobaptist offered a reward for one verse of the Bible which expressly teaches it, but the offer has not yet been accepted, and perhaps never will be. The arguments for immersion are all mere inferences or assumptions, and may be summarized as follows:

(1), The use of the prepositions *in*, *into* and *out of*, in the account of the baptism of Jesus and the eunuch. (2), John's baptizing at Aenon. (3), Burial with Christ in baptism. (4), The meaning of *baptizo*.

1. *As to the prepositions*: In our English Bible we read that John baptized in Jordan (Matt. iii. 6); that Jesus when he was baptized went up out of the water (Matt. iii. 16); the same record is found in Mark i. 9, 10; and in the baptism of the eunuch we read that both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and came up out of the water. (Acts

viii. 38.) It is inferred, or assumed, from this that Jesus and the eunuch were immersed. But this by no means follows. When we turn to the original Greek, the words *en*, *eis* and *apo* or *ek*, translated respectively *in*, *into* and *out of*, may with equal propriety be translated *at*, *to* and *from*; the Greek does not show that Christ came out of, or that the eunuch went into or came out of, the water. It is ambiguous; it may be so translated, or it may not.

To illustrate: the same word *eis* translated *into* in speaking of Philip and the eunuch going into the water occurs eleven times in the same chapter, and is nowhere else translated *into*. It is the same word used in John xx. 4, where John came first to (*eis*) the sepulchre, but went not in. The English language has some twenty-odd prepositions, the Greek only about a third as many; to make them do duty for all the ideas expressed in English by all our prepositions, their five or six leading prepositions have a variety of meanings, which has no parallel in English.* The original prepositions in

* The meanings of these prepositions, taken from

these passages, unlike ours, are indefinite, indicating only the place where the acts were done, and if the New Testament was still read in the original tongue, no argument would be based on them.

As to the baptism of Christ, none of the evangelists say he went to or into the water; as to whether he came out of or from the water after he was baptized, Matthew uses *apo*, which is ordinarily translated *from*, and is so rendered in the Revised Version; Mark, in the received Greek text, uses the same word as Matthew, but in some manuscripts, *ek*, which is ordinarily translated *out of* or *from*. The other evangelists do not mention

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Donegan's *Standard Greek Dictionary*, are: *En*—In, on, at, upon, with, by, as to, through, by means of. *Eis*—To, into, in the presence of, at, upon, on, for, with respect to, on account of, even to, up to, towards, about. *Apo*—From, away from, by, according to, of, with, through, out of. *Ek*—From, out of, from out of, away from, by, in virtue of.

In our English version, *en* is translated over 300 times *at*, *on*, *by* or *with*; *eis*, about 500 times *to*, and about as often *into*; *ek*, about 170 times *from*, and about 140 times *out of*; *apo* is used some 600 times, and even in the Baptist version is translated only six times *out of*.

the matter at all; hence, as to Christ being in the water, we have only one disputed word in one verse of Mark's Gospel, and this word is, in the New Testament, translated *from* oftener than *out of*. Nothing is said of going into or out of the water in any other baptism except the eunuch's, and there also the Greek words are wholly ambiguous. The Greeks had a way of expressing, by repeating the preposition before and after the verb, that a person went into and came out of anything when they wished to show this, and it is often used by the sacred writers, but never in regard to the water of baptism; so no weight can be given to these prepositions in our English version.

But if it were settled, as our English Bible reads, that Christ came out of the water, and that the eunuch and Philip both went into the water and came out of the water, it would not follow that they went under the water; the question would still remain, what did they do in the water? This would depend on other facts, such as the design of their baptism and the mode then in use. A large part of the Christian church to-day baptizes

by placing the candidate in the water and pouring or throwing the water on the head without immersing the person. The English translators did not understand their version to teach immersion, because they always say baptize *with* water, not *in* water. If they had understood their translation to mean that John immersed Christ, they would have translated the Greek so as to make John say: "I indeed baptize you in water, but he shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost." (Mark i. 8.) But they never do this. (Matt. iii. 11; Luke iii. 16; John i. 30–33; Acts i. 5.) Their version teaches baptism with water, not baptism in water. As the prepositions used in the original may be translated either way, they adopted the rendering of the Greek that accorded with the view then entertained as to the mode of Christ's baptism. It was then understood that Christ went into the water and John poured the water on his head. This we know from the old pictures and early fathers. One of these pictures is in the catacombs at Rome, and dates, perhaps, in the first century. There are many of them, and they all represent his baptism in this mode.

The date of these paintings cannot be exactly fixed, but they long antedate the present controversy about the mode of baptism. The conception that Christ was baptized in this way manifestly was held before the third century, for after this triple immersion, naked, was the accepted mode, and it would have been followed in the paintings if made after that, unless it was understood then that Christ was not baptized in this way.

Hear the testimony of the early fathers:

"He (John) washed away the sins of believers by the waters poured upon them."—*Paulinus of Nola.* "He poured water in the river."—*Aurelius Prudentius.* "Christ received baptism that he might save the Gentiles by baptism, that is, by the pouring of the purifying dew."—*Lactantius.* "The creature (John) pours water on the head of the Creator."—*St. Bernard.*

2. *As to John's baptizing at Ænon.* In our English Bible we read: "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there." (John iii. 23.) It is inferred or assumed from this that he immersed. But we also read of him, that he came into all the country about Jordan, and that the multitude came forth to

him to be baptized (Luke iii. 3–7); that he
baptized in the wilderness (Mark i. 4), and
at Bethabara (Bethany) beyond Jordan, be-
fore coming to Aenon. (John i. 28.) He
surely did not baptize by immersion in all
the country about Jordan, or in the wilder-
ness, which is desert. And when we turn
to the original text of the passage quoted, we
find it says this: "And John also was bap-
tizing at the springs near to Salim, because
there were many waters (or springs) there."
We all know the necessity of a supply of water
for any large gathering. A camp-meeting, or
encampment, is always located where there
is clean water. John first preached and
baptized in the wilderness, then at Betha-
bara, beyond Jordan, then in all the country
about Jordan; but when the crowd to hear
him became a multitude, he went to the
springs near Salim, so that the people might
have a supply of water. The expression
translated "much water" is used several
times in the New Testament; it is in every
other place translated "many waters," and
there is nothing to show it is here used in
an exceptional sense. The early fathers so

understood this passage. Ambrose (born A. D. 340) says: "Whosoever attains to the sacred mysteries of Christ must be first besprinkled by these fountains."

A simple stream would have answered all the purposes of immersion, but many waters would be, indeed, needed when Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan went out to hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness. These Jews, except they washed, ate not. For the same reason, when a multitude came forth to his preaching, John went also to the Jordan. The stream was well adapted to this purpose, but very unsuitable for immersing a multitude, from the water being cold and deep, and the treacherous current, running ten miles an hour, so dangerous. These are the only allusions to a river, or much water, in connection with baptism, and this was under the old dispensation. In the whole subsequent record under the new dispensation, though thousands were baptized in a region proverbially ill-watered, so far as appears, they were all baptized where they were, without any delay, or preparation, or going to water,

or doing anything to show that a quantity of water was needed.

3. *As to burial with Christ in baptism.* Two passages are relied on. In Romans, the apostle, having shown that Christians are not under the covenant of works, turns to the question whether, being saved by grace, they may live in sin. He says:

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destoyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Rom. vi. 2–7.)

It is inferred or assumed, from the use of the words *buried* and *planted*, that the apostle refers to immersion as the mode of baptism; but the other words used show that this is not his meaning. He says, "baptized into Jesus Christ"; "baptized into his death,"

(not in water); "therefore we *are* buried with him by baptism into death" (not in baptism in water); "if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death," (not his burial), "we shall be also [planted together] in the likeness of his resurrection" (in heaven). "Our old man *is* crucified with him [dead], that the body of sin might be destroyed."

These expressions cannot possibly refer to immersion. By "planted together" (Greek, *grown together*) the apostle means the same as in the parallel passage in Colossians when he says "rooted and built up in him" (Col. ii. 7), for *together* refers to Christ, as is shown by the context, and in the Revised Version the phrase reads "united with him." People are not "united with Christ" by immersion "in the likeness of his death," for he died on the cross, and no mode of baptism is in any likeness of this. If this clause refers to immersion, then it teaches that those thus "planted together" (or united with him) *shall be also* planted together (or united with him) "in the likeness of his resurrection." But the apostle did not mean that all who are baptized with water shall be united

with Christ "in the likeness of his resurrection," for he knew that there were many, like Ananias and Simon Magus, baptized of men, but having no part in Christ.

What, then, is this baptism, "into Jesus Christ," or "into his death," whereby, our old man being crucified with him, we are planted or united together, and shall be also planted or united together in the likeness of his resurrection? The apostle does not leave us in doubt:

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. iii. 27.) "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

It is the divine baptism (new birth) which John foretold and Christ promised:

"He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Luke iii. 16.) "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.)

That he refers to the new birth or baptism with the Spirit is clear from the words: "Our old man *is* crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. . . . For in that he died, he died unto sin once but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Like-

wise reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." By this baptism our old man is crucified with him, and "like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," even so we, born again by his grace, "should walk in newness of life." If we have been united with him in this "likeness of his death" (death to sin), we shall be also united with him in the likeness of his resurrection. The likeness referred to is between Christ's death and resurrection and the Christian's death unto sin and new life unto righteousness, for our old man, being crucified with Christ, is the reason assigned for our being united (planted) with him. The obligation to "walk in newness of life" accrues, not from baptism, but from regeneration. The question before the apostle is, whether Christians shall continue in sin, and as a reason for their not doing so he urges that they are one with Christ, and being by the Spirit raised from the deadness of sin and united with him in this likeness of his death, they should not walk in sin. He refers as a reason for his conclusion to the effect of the Spirit on the

heart, by which the old man is crucified with Christ and a new creature is born in him. The mode of baptizing the body, or its condition when baptized, would throw no light on the argument; it fills none of the conditions of the text; the burial referred to is not in the mode of an earthly baptism, but an effect of the divine baptism into Jesus Christ.

The Greek makes this even plainer. The contention of immersion rests on a shade of meaning conveyed by the English words, not expressed by the original. Our words *buried* and *planted* do not exactly agree in meaning with the corresponding Greek words.

"Compare any two languages and you will find that there are, as mathematicians would say, many incommensurable quantities. To use DeQuincey's happy image from the language of eclipses, the correspondence between the disk of the original word and its translated representive is, in thousands of instances, not annular, the centres do not coincide, the words overlap."—*Matthews on Words.*

The Greeks usually burned their dead, and a corpse was said to be buried if only a little sand was sprinkled on it. The word *thapto*,*

* "*Thapto*, to perform the last duties of sepulture, whether by inhumation or by burning the body."—*Donegan.*

translated *buried*, signifies strictly the last rites to a dead body, without regard to mode. It expresses rather the rite than any mode of doing it; like our expression *to lay away*, which is sometimes used for *bury*. The word *symphytos*,* translated *planted together*, is an adjective signifying state or condition, and means, literally, *grown together*. The word translated *have been* before *planted* is, literally, *have been born*, and is the same word used by Christ to Nicodemus in telling of the new birth. (John iii. 3, 6.) Substitute *lay away* for *buried*, and *united* for *planted*, or insert *born* before it, and all semblance of immersion is gone.†

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* "*Symphytos* (adjective *sym*, together, and *phyo*, to grow), grown together, born or produced with or together, natural, inherent."—*Ib.*

† "The first English Baptists, when they read the phrase "buried in baptism," instantly thought of an *English* burial, and, therefore, baptized by laying the body in the form of burying in their own country. But they might have observed that Paul wrote to Romans and that Romans did not bury, but burned, the dead, and buried nothing of the dead but their ashes in urns; so that no fair reasoning on the form of baptizing can be drawn from the mode of burying the dead in England."—*Robinson, Baptist historian.*

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are laid away with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been born, united together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.

In the other passage relied on, the meaning is the same. It is this:

"In whom [Christ] also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are raised with him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." (Col. ii. 11–13.)

The apostle contrasts the circumcision made without hands with the uncircumcision of sin. The words "buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him," cannot refer to water baptism, for he says that this rising is "through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." The rising from water

baptism is a mere physical act, not through faith, nor of the circumcision made without hands. The rising which he refers to is the rising from the deadness of sin (verse 13), for this is through faith; and, as God hath raised Christ from the dead, so these "hath he quickened together with him." That this is the meaning is also shown by the words concluding the argument:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. . . . . For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 1, 3.)

The apostle's theme is our life in Christ; he has not a physical condition or act in mind, but wholly a spiritual matter, the circumcision made without hands, the change in the heart when born again. The death and putting away (burial) that he refers to is death to sin, the putting away of the old man, and the birth of the new creature in Christ. This is the scope of his argument, and there is no allusion to baptism with water. Who would contend that the words *dead*, *crucified*, *circumcised*, and *quickened*, in these passages, are to be taken literally, and

understood as referring to physical things? And by what sort of process can it be maintained that the words *baptized*, *planted*, *buried*, and *risen*, used with them, and plainly in the same sense, shall be so construed? The death mentioned is death to sin, a spiritual death; the burial into a spiritual death must be a spiritual burial; so the baptism which is the spiritual burial into a spiritual death must be a spiritual baptism, and is, therefore, called a baptism "into Jesus Christ." When the Saviour explained to Nicodemus the death to sin and the new life with God, he persisted in understanding only our Lord's words, overlooking their spiritual meaning; and so many now deal in the same way, not only with these words of Paul, but with the very record of Christ's rebuke to Nicodemus. There is no liquid grave in any of these passages; they are purely spiritual; and those who read water baptism in them make the error so often made in dealing with the Scriptures—of reading the words, not the sense, and making it of the earth, earthy.

Recognizing that this is the sense of these passages, many persons concede that they

are spiritual and refer only to the baptism of the heart; but they insist that the language of the apostle and the figure of speech which he uses show that he has immersion in mind as the mode of water baptism. But this is to give away the whole case for immersion. If it be conceded that these passages refer to a spiritual baptism, it must also be conceded that they relate to the *effect*, and not to the *mode* of it; for, unmistakably, the point made is, that the whole nature being regenerated, and a new creature made in Jesus, the old man is thereby put away; and so the new man, "grown together" with Christ, cannot consistently continue in sin. The apostle's metaphor does not rest upon an external act, but on a present state or condition, in which we "are buried" with Christ, the old man "is crucified" with him, and we "be dead with" him. His meaning is, that in this new relation the old man should be as far removed from the Christian as a dead body laid away in its last resting-place. If his figure of speech refers to a state or condition, the *effect* of this spiritual baptism, how can any reliance be placed on the form

of a word for the *mode* of physical baptism, which would throw no light on his theme, and, clearly, was not referred to?

If dealt with in this way, the Bible can be made to prove anything. By such means an earnest divine once proved that the earth is square and not round, quoting Rev. vii. 1: "And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth." "For," said he, "how could four angels stand on the four corners of the earth if it was round and had no corners?" In this way others more learned, but not more sincere, have proved that all power in heaven and earth is committed to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19), and that the bread and wine of the communion are the real body and blood of Christ. (John vi. 53.) All of these positions, and many others, like the burial with Christ in baptism, come from reading alone the words of some isolated verse, instead of looking to the whole Bible for its meaning.

4. *The meaning of baptizo.* Immersionists claim the original meaning of *baptizo* was alone to immerse, and infer or assume from this that it never had any other meaning,

and so that only immersion is baptism. The original meaning of the word is a vexed question, on which much learning has been spent, yet, after all, the real question is not what the word originally meant, but in what sense it is actually used in the New Testament.

"Words not only for the most part ride very slackly at anchor on their etymologies, borne, as they are, hither and thither by the shifting tides and currents of usage, but they often break away from their moorings altogether. The knowledge of a man's antecedents may help us sometimes to estimate his present self, but the knowledge of what a word meant three or twenty centuries ago may only mislead us as to its meaning now."—*Matthews on Words.*

Thus *prevent*, when our Bible was translated, meant *come before*, and *let* meant to *hinder;* now, *prevent* means to *hinder*, and *let* means to *allow*. So in the speech of even our fathers an *impertinent* remark was simply one that did not touch the question, and an *indifferent* judge was one who decided impartially; *wince* meant to *kick*, and *knave* was a word of endearment meaning *boy*. The same word at the same time has very different meaning in different localities; thus

the words *clever*, *corn*, and *engineer* have very different meanings in England and America.

As the Greeks had no conception of revealed religion, this is peculiarly true of the Greek of the New Testament. The Greek word *Theos*, there used for God, with them designated any object of worship; *deiphon*, the word used for the last supper, was a full or great feast; *presbyteros*, the word used for elder, with them meant *old man*, though from the first young men filled this office in the church; *pneuma* (spirit) with the Greeks meant wind. Many other illustrations could be given where the whole meaning of the New Testament would be destroyed by giving the Greek words their original meaning.

The primary meaning of *baptizo* is thus stated by a leading Baptist:

"From *bapto*, to dip, came the verbal adjective *baptos*, dipt; and from this verbal adjective, by means of the termination *-izo*, was formed *bapt-izo*, which may be clumsily described as primarily meaning to cause to be dipt, or to bring into a dipt condition." . . . . (*Broadus, on Immersion*, page 59.)

Observe, its original signification indicated, not mode, but state or effect—to cause to be *baptos*, or to bring into a *baptos* condition. But *baptos* did not mean alone dipt, but bathed, washed, etc., and so the original meaning of the word was to put into a dipt, bathed, or washed condition; and from this, by an easy transition, common in all languages, it would come in time to signify to *wet*, *wash*, or *cleanse*. Just as with us, *asperse* originally meant to sprinkle, and *intoxicate*, to poison. The root word *bapto*, which Dr. Broadus translated *dip*, is used in the Septuagint in Daniel iv. 33, where our English version correctly reads that Nebuchadnezzar's body "was *wet* with the dew of heaven." This use of the word is not uncommon; Origen, Jerome, and many other ancient writers translate it into Latin by *aspergo*, to *sprinkle*.

Pedobaptists do not hold that *baptizo* is used in the New Testament in the sense of *pour* or *sprinkle*; their position is, it is used in the general sense of wash, or cleanse, and not as a modal word. Immersion rests on the claim that it means only to immerse, and is

never used in any other sense. The question before us is, therefore, did the sacred writers use it in the sense of immerse or in the general sense of wash or cleanse? It is reasonable to suppose they used it in the sense it was then understood by the Jews. About three hundred years before this, Greek had become the common language of the people, and so their Scriptures, including the Apocrypha had been translated into it by seventy of their learned men. Their version, called the Septuagint, was in general use, and so is, perhaps, the best index of the sense of the Greek words among the Jews. *Baptizo* is there used in Judith xiii. 7, where Judith "went out nightly to the valley of Bethulia and baptized herself at a spring of water in the camp." This was not immersion, because it is recorded "she came out clean." (Vs. 9.) Immersion was not the mode of woman's purifying among the Jews, and the point of the passage is Judith's performing the ceremonial of cleansing. Besides, a spring would not be suitable for immersion. In chapter vii. 7, it is said that soldiers guarded the spring, and a lady would not

have stripped herself in their presence. The word is also used in Ecclesiasticus xxiii. 25, to designate the Mosaic cleansing for the dead: "He that is *baptized* from a dead body and again touches it, what profit has he from his washing?" The mode of cleansing from a dead body was not by immersion, but by sprinkling:

"Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanliness is yet upon him." (Num. xix. 13.)

That this use of the word in reference to this ceremonial was familiar to the Jews is also shown by the fact that Josephus, a learned Jew who lived about the time the New Testament was written, so uses it. Speaking of this same Mosaic cleansing for the dead, he says: "*Baptizing* (cleansing) by this ashes put into spring water, they *sprinkled* on the third and seventh day."—(*Jew. Ant.*, B. 4.—C. 5.) In all of these passages the word is used in the general sense of cleanse, and not in the specific sense

of sprinkle or immerse. It seems also used in the Septuagint in the sense of cleanse, in 2 Kings v. 14, where Naaman went and "baptized himself seven times" at the command of Elisha. For the prophet told him to "*wash seven times* and thou shalt be *clean*" (vs. 10); the Mosaic rule was "sprinkle upon him that is cleansed from the leprosy seven times" (Lev. xiv. 7), and it is recorded that Naaman baptized himself seven times "and he was *clean.*" The teaching of the rabbis was that he was healed by following the divine mode at the word of Elisha. Jesus says he was *cleansed.* (Luke iv. 27.)

The word is similarly used in the New Testament for the Jewish ceremonial cleansings where there is no reference to Christian baptism. When our Lord went to dine with the Pharisees, he failed to wash before dinner, and the Pharisees marvelled "that he was not first baptized before dinner." (Luke xi. 38.) Mark also, in telling of the complaint that Christ's disciples ate with unwashed hands, makes the same use of the word, "and when they (the Jews) come from the market, except they are baptized,

they eat not, and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the baptism of pots and cups, brazen vessels and of tables." (Mark vii. 4.) Our English version reads in these passages *wash*, but the Greek is *baptize*. Of course no race of people were immersed every time they came home from the market (or street). This Jewish custom of washing, or cleansing, was to pour water on, or sprinkle it with hyssop. (Num. viii. 7; 2 Kings iii. 11; Psa. li. 7.) To dip his hands in water as we do was to a Jew to defile them. Our Saviour refers to this ceremonial sprinkling of the cups and plates in his reply to the Pharisee (Luke xi. 39), where he says they make *clean* the outside of the cup and the platter. (See, also, Matt. xxiii. 25.) The Jews did not sit at table as we do, but lay on couches at full length, and, of course, these were not immersed. The pots, cups, brazen vessels, and couches were all ceremonially cleansed by sprinkling them with clean water. The point in both these passages is, that Christ and his disciples neglected a Jewish ceremonial cleansing, and this cleansing is called

baptism. Mark explains that unwashed hands were considered defiled, that is, ceremonially unclean (Mark vii. 2), and in his answer to them Christ explains that what is from without cannot defile a man, and that all things are clean to them who are cleansed in heart. (Matt. xv. 1–20; Mark vii. 6–23; Luke xi. 39–44.)

Paul, the most scholarly of the New Testament writers, in Hebrews ix. 12–22 names many of the Jewish purifying ceremonies, and says that they were by sprinkling, as is well known from the Old Testament. Yet, in verse 10, he calls all these baptisms. The English Bible reads "divers washings," but Paul wrote "divers baptisms." Paul, also, referring to the Mosaic cleansing for the dead, calls it baptism, as in the Septuagint and Josephus: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?" (1 Cor. xv. 29.)

There is not a passage in the New Testament where the sense will not be preserved by giving the word the sense of cleanse. In this sense John the Baptist declared to the Jews that he baptized (cleansed) them with

water, but that Jesus would baptize (cleanse) them with the Holy Ghost. In this sense our Lord called his sufferings and crucifixion a baptism; in this sense his disciples asked to be baptized with the baptism that he was baptized with; and so Paul says, "Our fathers were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." (1 Cor. x. 2.) "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.)

The early Christian fathers also use the word in the sense of *wash* or *cleanse*. These men spoke Greek as their mother tongue; they lived in the same age of the language as the writers of the New Testament, and they could not be ignorant of the meaning of the word. Origen, one of the earliest of them, in telling of Elijah having the water poured on the wood (1 Kings xviii. 33), says that he *baptized* the wood; Ambrose calls it a type of baptism; and Clemens Alexandrinus, referring to the tears of a reclaimed backslider, says, "With tears a second time he is baptized." In some of the oldest manuscripts the word *sprinkle* is used for *baptize* in Mark vii. 4, quoted above,

making it read, "except they are sprinkled, they eat not," etc. This occurs so often that scholars are uncertain which word was originally used, though the other words of the verse are always the same, thus showing that in those early times the two words were understood to mean the same thing; for, plainly, no change was intended in the sense, as the texts are otherwise alike, and all designate the Jewish ceremonial sprinkling in the next clause as "the baptism of pots and cups, brazen vessels, and of tables."

Referring to Psalm li. 7, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean," Ambrose says: "He who desired to be cleansed by a typical baptism was sprinkled with the blood of a lamb by a bunch of hyssop." Paraphrasing Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you," Jerome says: "Upon the believing, and those converted from error, I will pour the clean water of saving baptism." Justin Martyr calls circumcision "baptism." He says: "What is the message of circumcision to me who have received testimony from God? What need is there of baptism to one bap-

tized by the Holy Ghost?" So Ambrose calls sorrow a baptism administered by Christ to cleanse from sin; and Origen says: "The Saviour brings both sword and fire, and baptizes those things which could not be purged by the purification of the Holy Spirit."

In this sense, that suffering was a means of purification, many of the fathers call martyrdom a baptism. Cyprian calls the confession of the penitent thief on the cross "a baptism of a public confession and of blood." Tertullian says: "These two baptisms (water and blood) he (Christ) shed forth from the wound of the pierced side." Origen, speaking of the Jews crossing Jordan dry shod under Joshua (Josh. iii. 16, 17), says they "were all baptized unto Joshua with the Spirit and the river"; and Cyril, alluding to the Jews' "divers baptisms," says: "We have been baptized, not with bare water, nor with the ashes of a heifer—we are sprinkled (with these) to purify the flesh alone, as says the blessed Paul—but with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Thus we have the use of the word before

the New Testament, in it or about that time and long afterwards, all showing it signified cleansing, and the standard Greek lexicons all give wet, wash, cleanse, or some such term, as one of its meanings. There is a Greek word corresponding precisely to immerse, but it is never used of baptism. Immerse comes to us from Latin, but the early fathers who wrote in Latin for people speaking that tongue did not use the Latin form of immerse for *baptizo;* they simply transferred the word, thus showing conclusively *immerse* was not then regarded as its true meaning, for if so, why did they not use it instead of coining the Greek? In the light of all this, to contend that it means always immerse, and nothing but immerse, is to shut one's eyes to the facts. The truth is, there is not in the Greek language a word of wider range of meaning; it is subjective and indicates a result, not the mode of effecting it.

The above is substantially all the Bible contains to sustain immersion. Not a line of the Old Testament is shown to support it, and no paragraph or entire passage of the New Testament is cited as designed to teach

it. The first three points rest entirely on the mere sound of a single word in a verse here and there of our English translation of the New Testament, and the last point on the extreme position (which is true of no other like word) that *baptizo*, at all times and at all places, had but one meaning.

What, then, is the proof of affusion? Is there any direct evidence of it, or any passage designed to teach it? Does it rest, too, on the sound of a single word in this or that verse of the New Testament alone, or is there any unity of testimony in the two Testaments on this subject?

In the next chapter we shall see.

CHAPTER III.

THE EVIDENCE FOR AFFUSION.

THE evidence for affusion may be considered thus: 1, Prophecy and its fulfilment; 2, The character of John; 3, The purpose of Christ's baptism; 4, The situation of the apostles; 5, The significance of baptism.

1. *Prophecy and its fulfilment.* Baptism is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with John the Baptist preaching repentance before the coming of the Lord. The Jews knew that Messias should come, and that Elijah, or his messenger, should prepare the way before him (Mal. iv. 5); so when John was preaching, the Jews sent to learn who he was:

"And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizeth thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?" (John i. 25.)

Why did the Jews suppose John would not baptize if he was not Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? How was his bap-

tizing evidence to them that he was one of these?

After he had baptized Christ:

"John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." (John i. 32, 33.)

Why did he suppose that the Jews would understand that "he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" is Christ? They had no means of knowing, unless from the prophets. Then, what had the prophets foretold to lead the Jews to think John the Baptist was the Christ, or Elias, or that prophet, when they saw him baptizing; or to make them know that "he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost" is Christ? The prophecies referred to are these:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." (Mal. iii. 1.) "Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all

your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh; and I will give you a heart of flesh." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26.) "Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have *poured out* my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God." (Ezek. xxxix. 29.) "For I will *pour* water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will *pour* my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." (Isa. xliv. 3.) "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he *sprinkle* many nations." (Isa. lii. 14, 15.) "Behold, I will *pour out* my Spirit unto you." (Prov. i. 23.) "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." (Joel ii. 28.) "Until the Spirit be *poured upon* us from on high. . . . And the work of righteousness shall be peace." (Isa. xxxii. 15.) "And I will *pour upon* the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications." (Zech. xii. 10.)

Observe that in every prophecy the water is said to be sprinkled or poured, and the Spirit poured out. John the Baptist said: "I indeed have baptized you with water,

but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." (Mark i. 8.) He knew that the Holy Ghost was to be poured out, and that his hearers so understood. Yet he compared what he was doing to this pouring out of the Spirit. If he had immersed them, the immersion in water could not have been held up as a symbol of the promised outpouring of the Spirit, because there would be no resemblance between them. But if John was sprinkling water on them with hyssop, according to Jewish custom, he might well say, referring to the promised outpouring of God's Spirit, "I indeed have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost"; for, clearly, his hearers would then have understood the meaning from the resemblance of the outpouring of the water from the hyssop to the outpouring of the Spirit foretold by the prophets. He could not have said, "I indeed immerse you in water, but he shall immerse you in the Holy Ghost," without violating well-settled Jewish ideas and the express language of prophecy on which he relied; and that this was not his meaning is plain from the sub-

sequent record. Christ, after his resurrection, commanded his disciples to wait for the promise of the Father:

"For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts i. 5.)

This promise was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost:

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it [the sound] filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it *sat upon* each of them." (Acts ii. 2, 3.)

This was, then, regarded as a baptism by affusion, not by immersion; for Peter, quoting the passage given above, said:

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out* of my Spirit upon all flesh." (Acts ii. 16, 17.)

And after explaining how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies, he added that he "hath *shed forth* this which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 33.) At the house of Cornelius:

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell on* all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were as-

tonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . . Then answered Peter, Can any man *forbid* water, that these should not be baptized, which have *received* the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts x. 44, 45, 47.)

After this, in giving an account of his baptism of Cornelius and his household, Peter said:

"And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on* them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Acts xi. 15, 16.)

So Paul says:

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed on us abundantly* [Revised Version, *poured out upon us richly*], through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus iii. 5, 6.)

Thus we have the united testimony of the prophets, of John the Baptist, and of the apostles to the Spirit and the water being poured out. There is no hint of immersion in the prophets. When Christ was baptized the Spirit descended on him. (Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10; Luke iii. 22; John i. 23.) Min-

isters were ordained by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (1 Tim. iv. 14; Acts xiii. 3.) John the Baptist says "baptize *with* water," "baptize *with* the Holy Ghost," never *in* water, or *in* the Holy Ghost. (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 26.) To bring out clearly that the baptism with the Holy Ghost which Christ promised is the outpouring of the Spirit foretold by the prophets, it is recorded again and again that the Spirit *sat* or *fell* on them, or was *shed* on them, or was *shed forth*, or *poured out;* and this shedding forth, or pouring out, of the Spirit is declared to be the fulfilment of both Christ's promise and the Old Testament prophecies. Here immersion is excluded, beyond doubt. The baptism with the Spirit conformed strictly to the prophecies; the baptism with water must, too, have conformed to them, for it is expressed by the same word, is foretold in the same passages, and is by the apostles associated with it. Not only is John's baptism with water held up as a symbol of the prophesied pouring out of the Spirit, but the resemblance was so natural that the people

at once perceived the meaning. So his baptizing led to the question asked him by the Jews, and the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on the Gentiles suggested to Peter that no one should *forbid* water to those who had *received* the Spirit.

"Can any forbid water to these who have received the Spirit? The expression to forbid, used with water, is interesting as showing that the practice was to bring the water to the candidate, not the candidate to the water. This, which would be implied by the word under any other circumstances, is rendered certain when we remember that they were assembled in the house."—*Dean Alford.*

2. *John's character.* John the Baptist was the promised messenger to God's chosen people. His message to them was: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 2.) He was the prophet of the Highest, sent to his people "before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." (Luke i. 76.) He did no miracle (John x. 4), and his sole claim to authority rested on the law and the prophets. Coming in such a character, he must have conformed to the Scripture he came to fulfil. Besides, he was

the son of a priest; the office was hereditary, and so John was a priest. Hence, he did not enter upon his ministry until about thirty years of age, which was the age at which a priest entered on the functions of his office. (Luke I. 5, 41; Num. iv. 1–4.) No nation was ever so attached to its sacred ceremonies as the Jews, and, if John had been an innovator, there would have been a clamor at once, but we read nothing of the sort; on the contrary, there was a general outpouring of the people to be baptized of him. As to this the record is very clear:

"Then went out to him *Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan*, and were baptized of him in (at) Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) "And there went out unt him *all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem and were all* baptized of him in (at) the river Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark i. 5.)

That the great mass of the common people were baptized by John is evident, not only from the broad language used in the above passages, but from what is said when Christ afterwards testified to John's greatness:

"And *all* the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the

baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him." (Luke vii. 29, 30.)

On account of their devotion to their sacred ordinances, this general baptism of the Jews could reasonably only have been as Moses had purified their fathers. What, then, was by the Jewish Scriptures the mode of administering this ordinance?

"He took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people." (Heb. ix. 19.) "The water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean." (Num. xix. 20.) "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times." (Lev. xiv. 7.) "Sprinkle the water of purifying upon them." (Num. viii. 7.)

For fourteen hundred years this method of cleansing has been familiar to the Jews; in some instances the person cleansed was directed to wash himself, but immersion by the priest was unknown. David says: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." It is past belief that John the Baptist, a priest among such people, could have introduced a new mode without an uproar,

or could have got so many to submit to a ceremony unfamiliar to them, for which no Scripture warrant could be shown.

That John baptized by the old mode is also shown by the numbers he baptized, for one man could not have immersed so many, but he could easily have sprinkled them with hyssop, as Moses had purified all the people at the opening of that dispensation. At this time Judea was a very populous country, having at least 5,000,000 inhabitants, and no man could have immersed the mass of the people in the short course of John's ministry. Had he immersed 300 every day, in winter and summer, he could have baptized in this way only about 150,000 in the whole time. No one man could have immersed so many; yet this would have been only three per cent. of the people. Evidently there was a general baptism of the nation by John, and it is plain that he baptized them personally. The record is that John baptized, and that Jesus baptized not, but his disciples. (John iv. 2.) John says everywhere: "I indeed baptize you with water." And when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized; and,

clearly, the multitude and Christ were baptized by the same person. (Luke iii. 7, 21.) Besides, John carried on extensive conversations with large numbers of persons while baptizing them, which he could only have done if sprinkling them with hyssop. (Matt. iii. 7–12; Luke iii. 7–17.) This accounts, also, for the peculiar wording of the record of our Lord's baptism. By the old mode the priest stood, and the people filed in front of him and were sprinkled with hyssop as they passed. If an improper person came, he was stopped and not allowed to receive the ordinance. When Christ came unto John to be baptized of him:

"John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, *suffer* it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he *suffered* him." (Matt. iii. 14, 15.)

Observe, the question was, whether John should *suffer* something. If John had taken hold of Christ and plunged him under the water, it could not with any appropriateness be said that "then he suffered him," but if John first stopped Christ when he came for-

ward to the ordinance, and, after hearing hi answer, then allowed him to proceed, thi language would describe accurately the trans action, and, unexplained, it could hardl have conveyed any other meaning to the Jews familiar with the Mosaic ceremony, for whom primarily this gospel was written. Only running water could be used for this purpose (Num. xix. 17), and so John baptized at Aenon and the river Jordan. That his baptism was in the prescribed mode for purifying is not only shown by his character and the above circumstances, but also by the fact that it is called purifying. After Jesus began his ministry, his disciples baptized. This having led to a dispute between the Jews and John's disciples as to the right to baptize, the latter, zealous of their master's honor, reported to him how all men were coming to Jesus to be baptized, and he quieted them by declaring Christ's superior right. This controversy the evangelist calls, not a dispute about baptism, but a "question about purifying."

"After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried

with them and baptized, and John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim. . . . Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*. And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth and all men come to him. John answered and said. . . . Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease." "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples), he left Judea and departed again into Galilee." (John iii. 22; iv. 3.)

The statement of John's disciples to him, "Behold, the same baptizeth and all men come to him," shows their controversy with the Jews was about Christ's baptizing; and John's answer when they referred the question to him could only mean that they should not continue the contention. This is confirmed by the record that it arose when Jesus baptized in Judea, where John was baptizing, and that Christ, when he knew they had heard he baptized more than John, left Judea; for, clearly, the whole passage relates

to the same subject. In the preceding chapter we read that at the wedding feast at Cana "there were set there six water pots of stone after the manner of the purifying of the Jews" (John ii. 6); and this purifying Mark, Luke, and Paul call baptism. (See above, pages 38–40.)

"One of the leading errors on the subject of baptism is found in the supposition that this ordinance originated with the mission of John the Baptist. Baptism was no new ceremony introduced by John—it had been in constant use from the time of Moses."—*Dr. Boland.* "All nations of Israel do assent, as with one mouth, that all the nations of Israel were brought into the covenant among other things by baptism."—*Dr. Lightfoot.*

3. *The Purpose of Christ's Baptism.* The multitude was baptized by John unto repentance, but Christ was not baptized for this reason, for he had nothing to repent of, and John said that he had need to be baptized of Christ. (Matt. iii. 14.) Immersionists say that he was baptized as an example, but this is pure assumption, and in the very teeth of Scripture. Christ was not baptized before the people as an example to them, but after they were baptized. (Luke iii. 21.) He was

not baptized as an example to us, because he was not baptized until he was thirty years old, and John's baptism was not Christian baptism. (Acts xix. 3–5.) Why, then, was he baptized? Christ himself, replying to John, answers the question:

"Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." (Matt. iii. 15.)

This was the reason, then, for his baptism; but how did it fulfil all righteousness? This record is made only by Matthew, who wrote mainly for the Jews, to show that Jesus is the Messias of the covenant. In using this expression he could only have referred to the Jewish Scriptures, for these were the Jews' only standard of righteousness; and to a Jew writing for Jews what other meaning could the words convey? To what else but these Scriptures could the word *fulfil* refer?

If Jesus was baptized to fulfil the Scriptures, beyond doubt he was not immersed, for they did not teach immersion. God had ordained in the law sprinkling, and had, by prophet after prophet, extolled the ceremonial. Immersion was not directed. Is it

possible that the Jewish Messias, when baptized by a Jew, for the Jews, to fulfil the Jewish Scriptures, ignored the very Scriptures which he was fulfilling!

The cardinal error of immersionists is, that they persist in treating the New Testament as an independent work, and in reading it from the standpoint of the present, without regard to the circumstances of the parties at the time. Jesus was the Messias of the Jews, according to the Scriptures, a "minister of the circumcision," to confirm the promises made unto the fathers. (Rom. xv. 8.) He was "made under the law" (Gal. iv. 4); was "born King of the Jews" (Matt. ii. 2); was circumcised when eight days old; was presented to the Lord, according to the law of Moses, when the days of his mother's purification were accomplished (Luke ii. 21, 22); and he kept the law blameless. (Rom. v. 18.) He everywhere exalted the Scriptures, commanding the Jews to search them, saying, "for they are they which testify of me." He came, not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets. (Matthew v. 17.) John belonged to the old dispensation; he

was the prophet of the Highest, sent among his people "before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." (Luke i. 67–76.) He preached repentance; that the coming of Shiloh was at hand. (Luke iii.) The old dispensation continued until the Son came to his own, and they received him not; the new began when the Lamb of God was slain for the sins of the world, and the veil of the temple was rent in twain.

When every other act of Jesus' life was strictly in accord with the Scriptures, his baptism could not have been an exception. He was to be a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek. (Heb. v.) A priest did not enter on his functions until he was about thirty years old (Num. iv. 1–4), and he was then set apart to his office by the sprinkling of running water. (Numbers viii. 7.) So Christ, when he began to be about thirty years old, came to John, and was baptized, and entered on his ministry. (Luke iii. 23.) When he entered into the temple, teaching as one having authority, and they asked him by what authority he did these things, he referred them to his baptism by John (Matt.

xxi. 12–25); and his baptism by the Spirit after he was baptized by John is called his anointing (Acts x. 38), as the priests, after they were baptized with water, were anointed. (Exod. xxviii. 41.) He is also called a king; and the consecration of a king was always, among the Jews, by affusion. His birth, life, and death had been minutely foretold; and one great object of his baptism was to set him forth as the promised Messias. For this reason, he was not baptized with the people as one of them, but separately, and after they were all baptized. (Luke iii. 21.) It had been foretold that God's Spirit should be poured out upon him. This pouring out of the Spirit John called baptism with the Spirit, declaring that his baptism with water only foreshadowed it. So, when John had baptized Jesus, the Spirit, which was symbolized by the water pouring from the hyssop, descended upon Christ, fulfilling the ancient prophecies and the promise to John. (John i. 33.)

4. *The Situation of the Apostles.* It is plain from the narrative that Christ's disciples, all Jews, were very slow to realize that

they were no longer under the law, or that Christianity was not to absorb Judaism; hence, Peter and John went up into the temple at the hour of prayer. (Acts iii. 1.) Peter did not preach the gospel to Cornelius until thrice the vision appeared unto him (Acts x.), even then complaint was made of his conduct (Acts xi. 2); and years afterwards the dispute waxed so hot at Antioch that a special embassy was sent down to Jerusalem to settle it. (Acts xv.) This Judaizing tendency still long continued in the church. Paul circumcised Timothy. (Acts xvi. 3.) On his last visit to Jerusalem he was thus cautioned by James: "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law." (Acts xxi. 20.) And when Peter came to Antioch he separated himself from the Gentiles, "fearing them which were of the circumcision." (Gal. ii. 12.)

When such a spirit was so rife in the church, and continued so long, is it credible that an old and established mode was dropped and a new one introduced, never

used by the people and contrary to all their customs and ideas, without explanation or comment, and without objection from any one? True, they might have made a change, but who can believe that they made it under such circumstances without explanation or objection? Such a thing, among such a people, would have been no less than a miracle, for well-established sacred customs do not yield in this way. A great uproar was raised against Paul for even rumored innovations (Acts xxi. 20–28), but no such charge was made against James or the other apostles.

That baptism was not new when practiced by John the Baptist is shown in many ways. It is introduced in the record as something familiar, without explanation; no question was made of John's right to baptize until he denied being he who should "purify the sons of Levi." (Mal. iii. 3.) Christ's disciples at the same time also baptized. (John iv. 2.) Jesus names it only to confer it on the Gentiles (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16); and there is in the New Testament nowhere a direct command to baptize. The Lord's supper, being new, is minutely ex-

plained, but baptism is assumed throughout as something well understood, and the word which is always used for it is also (as shown) used indiscriminately for the Jewish purifications.

Sprinkling had been divinely ordained in the law in the service typifying the Saviour, and had been foretold by the prophets as a sign of his kingdom. When his disciples began to preach the gospel the New Testament was not written, and, as shown by Acts, they relied everywhere on the old Scriptures, insisting that Jesus had fulfilled them. The burden of their preaching was, "So it is written," and they declared that he came not to destroy, but to fulfil, all the law and the prophets. That while so teaching they abandoned without explanation or objection the mode ordained in the law and foretold by the prophets, and yet continued to express the ordinance by the same word that they used explicitly to designate the old ceremonial, cannot be credited. The New Testament is not distinct from the Old, but completes and fulfils it; both together constitute one book, emanating from one mind,

for one purpose, and with Christ as its central figure. Genesis shows the necessity for his coming, the law arranges for or typifies it, and to him bear all the prophets witness. To hold there was one mode of baptism in the old economy and another in the new, under the same plan of salvation, is to destroy the unity of the Scriptures, and make meaningless much of the old service.

The apostles did not consider that God's church in the world began at Pentecost. In Acts vii. 38, the Jews under Moses are spoken of as "the church in the wilderness." Some insisted that the promise was to the Jews only, but to the Gentiles it is said: "If ye be in Christ, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29); it is declared that "God hath not cast away his people" (Rom. xi. 2); the Gentiles are called the wild olive tree grafted into the good olive. (Rom. xi. 17, 24.) A graft cannot be set in a dead stock, but both living grow into one trunk. (See, also, Isa. ii. 2; Ezek. xvii. 23, 24; Matt. xxi. 43; Heb. xi. 4–40.) The patriarchs were saved just as we are. By faith in a promised

Saviour they trusted in God, and at Pentecost the covenant blessing to the church was realized. The Jewish synagogue became the Christian church; as the Jews had elders, these were ordained in all the churches; the Jewish Sabbath was changed to the Christian Sunday, and from the Jewish custom of meeting on the Sabbath to hear the Scriptures and worship God came the regular Sunday services of the sanctuary we now enjoy. After a prolonged struggle, the Levitical law was given up, but there is no record of any disputes about the mode of baptism, or any change in it.

Besides, the circumstances recorded in the New Testament point to the old mode, and many of them are inexplicable, or meaningless, on the other hypothesis. By the old mode, a great multitude could be baptized at once, but little water was needed and no change of clothing or preparation was necessary. Jerusalem is on a mountain and no river or stream near it, yet at Pentecost, when Peter preached, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three

thousand souls" (Acts ii. 41); and a few days afterwards "believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women." (Acts v. 14.) There was no known place at Jerusalem for immersing these multitudes of men and women; the apostles could not reasonably have done the labor, and there would be some record of such a remarkable thing, if done. So when the jailer at Philippi had brought Paul and Silas out of the hold, he was baptized, "he and all his, straightway" (Acts xvi. 33), and that they did not leave the jail is evident from what Paul said the next morning (vs. 37), and from the fact that this would have been a grave offence on the part of the jailer under the Roman law. Numbers were baptized in Jerusalem, Samaria, Damascus, Corinth, Philippi, Cæsarea, Ephesus, in a desert, in a private house, in a prison; and yet there is no record anywhere of difficulty in getting water or preparation for baptism, or change of clothing, or any adjournment or delay for this purpose. In this the Acts and Epistles are in striking contrast with the biographies and letters of immersionists. The

latter give a prominence to the subject that is wholly wanting in the sacred narratives, and even in this well-watered country abound in allusions to difficulties about water, to delays, and to preparations for the ordinance.

By the old mode the candidate stood; and in the earliest version of the New Testament, the Syriac, commonly called the Peschito, the word *baptizo* is everywhere translated "stand," because it is said the candidate stood to receive the ordinance. When Ananias came to Paul he said to him, "*Arise* and be baptized." (Acts xxii. 16.) "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith, and *arose* and was baptized. And when he had received meat he was strengthened." (Acts ix. 18, 19.) The Greek in the last sentence is a little stronger than the English; it reads, "and standing up was baptized." But the English is plain that he got up to be baptized, as under the Mosaic law, and the natural inference is, he was baptized right there. He was blind and had eaten nothing for three days, yet he was baptized before he

received meat. When the eunuch, a Jew, heard Isaiah's prophecy, and had it explained to him, "So shall he sprinkle many nations," when he came to water he said to Philip (not Philip to him), "See, here is water what doth hinder me to be baptized?" (Act viii. 36.) The way was desert, and there was no known usual supply of water on it suitable for immersion. Being both Jews they got down from the chariot and went to the water, for the eunuch must stand up when baptized, and only clean water could be used.

Under the Old Testament, the family was the unit, not the individual. The promise was to Abraham and his seed, and to Isaac and his seed. This same principle is clearly recognized by the apostles. Peter said at Pentecost: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 39.) The angel said to Cornelius: "Whereby thou shalt be saved and all thy house." (Acts xi. 14.) Paul said to the jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts xvi. 31.) So Lydia was

baptized and her household (Acts xvi. 15), and the household of Stephanas. (1 Cor. i. 16.) Paul also says: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 14.)

The promise to which Peter referred was the Old Testament promise including the children with their parents, and plainly Paul had in mind the same thing. The question of infant baptism cannot be argued here, but undoubtedly in these passages the apostles spoke from the Old Testament standpoint, and did not consider that it had passed away.

John says: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (1 John v. 8.) The Spirit was poured out; how then was the blood applied?

"And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin." (Exod. xii. 22.) "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people." (Exod. xxiv. 8.) "And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle his blood round about upon the altar."

(Lev. i. 11; iii. 2, 8.) "And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the Lord." (Lev. iv. 6, 17.) "And he shall sprinkle of the blood of the sin offering upon the side of the altar." (Lev. v. 9.) "And Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled round about upon the altar." (Lev. ix. 12.)

Other quotations might be given. The same idea runs through the New Testament. Christ is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John i. 29); or "our passover, sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. v. 7), and "a lamb without blemish" (1 Peter i. 19); and we are saved by the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter i. 2), and are come "to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Heb. xii. 24.) Christ's blood was poured out on the cross. (John xix. 34.) So Isaiah, in foretelling Christ's crucifixion, says: "So shall he sprinkle many nations." (Isa. lii. 15.)

The Spirit, the water, and the blood, all agree in one. The Spirit and the blood were poured out or sprinkled. The water and the blood both signified cleansing; and, as the

blood was sprinkled, the water must have been used in the same way. So Paul says, to the Hebrew Christians, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. x. 22.) The Jewish mode of cleansing their bodies with pure water was by sprinkling; and what but this sprinkling of their bodies suggested the figure, "Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience"?

The word *baptizo* is used in the New Testament of three things: 1, The Jewish ceremonial; 2, The baptism with the Spirit; 3, The Christian sacrament. In the first, the water was sprinkled or poured; to dip a thing in water was in a Jew's eyes to pollute it. In the second, the Spirit descended, was shed forth or poured out. In the third, the idea must have been the same, else why was the same word used to express it?

5. *The Significance of Baptism.* The design of the ordinance gives a crucial test for determining the scriptural mode, for all Scripture ceremonials by their form point to their significance. Pedobaptists hold that its design is to typify the work of the Holy Spirit;

that the sign must be like the thing signified; and hence the water, like the Spirit, should be poured out or shed forth. Immersionists are forced to maintain that baptism represents the burial of Christ, for immersion cannot have any other meaning. This is the gist of their position, the key-stone of the arch; take it away and the whole falls. Only two verses of Scripture can be found to sustain it (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12), and they do not relate to baptism at all unless it represents burial. In both these passages, as shown, there is only an inference resting on the peculiar shade of meaning of an English word. The significance of the Lord's supper is expressly declared at its institution, and it would be singular indeed if the significance of baptism was nowhere declared in the Old Testament, or in the Gospels or Acts, but left to the sound of a word in two passages of Paul's later epistles, where his theme is salvation by faith (Rom. v. 1), and not of ordinances. (Col. ii. 14.) Is this the fact? Is the Bible, down to these passages, silent on this point?

Our Lord recognized the Old Testament

ceremonials, and his apostles, especially Paul, called them baptism. If they were baptism they must have agreed with it in significance, for Paul always regards the spirit rather than the form. What, then, was their significance? All the books of the Bible answer, as with one voice, that they signified cleansing. They were called *purifying*, persons were distinguished as *clean* and *unclean*, only living or clean water was used, and the outward act was everywhere recognized as significant of inward grace. There was nothing about them to represent burial; they pointed to a cleansed life. Prophecy also indicated this for the new dispensation.

"Wash ye, make you clean." (Isa. i. 16.) "Wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." (Jer. iv. 14.) "And I will *cleanse* them from all their iniquity." (Jer. xxxiii. 18.) "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xiii. 1.) "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem." (Zech. xiv. 8.) "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall *purify* the sons of Levi." (Mal. iii. 3.)

Space does not permit other quotations. Throughout the prophets the outward cleansing with water is made typical of the Spirit poured upon us from on high. (See above, pages 47, 48.) So in the New Testament the same word is used to express the visible cleansing with water, and the invisible cleansing with the Spirit. They are both called baptism. At the first mention of it there is no explanation, except John the Baptist declares: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." (Matt. iii. 11.) He unquestionably uses the word here in the sense of cleanse, for he adds: "Whose *fan* is in his hand, and he will thoroughly *purge* his floor." (Vs. 12.) This record is made at the very outset of all the Gospels, to teach that the physical act signified the Spirit's work, and that importance should not be attached to the sign or the shadow, but to the substance or thing signified.

If there could be any doubt as to his meaning, it is set at rest by the rest of the record. The angel had declared of John that he should

"go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, . . . to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke i. 17.) He also declared that Jesus should "*save* his people *from* their sins." (Matt. i. 21.) Both these promises were based on the ancient prophecies that he should "purge away their dross" (Isa. i. 25), "purify the sons of Levi" (Mal. iii. 3), put "a new spirit" within them (Ezek. xxxvi. 26), and open a fountain "for sin and for uncleanness." (Zech. xiii. 1.) John preached, "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 2.) He exhorted all to a purer life (Luke iii. 8–14); and they were baptized of him, "confessing their sins." (Mark i. 5.)

Under such circumstances, the Jews could not have given the baptism of John any other meaning. That John himself looked upon it as signifying cleansing is shown, also, by what he said when Christ came to be baptized: "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" (Matt. iii. 14); for he felt that Jesus, who was perfectly holy, needed no cleansing from him. For this reason, too, it is recorded that Jesus

baptized not, but his disciples (John iv. 2); for he baptized with the Spirit, and not with water that symbolized it.

The baptism of John the Baptist could not have typified Christ's burial, because this was not its prophetic character; nor could the next recorded baptism, that by Christ's disciples; for, Christ not being dead, it was, like John's, simply unto repentance, typifying the work of the Spirit. But, plainly, there was no change after this in the act, or its significance; Christ gave it this meaning in his parting words (Luke xxiv. 47–49; Acts i. 5–9); so did Peter at Pentecost (Acts ii. 14, 38) and at the house of Cornelius. (Acts xi. 15, 16.) In the whole New Testament, as in the prophets, water cleansing the filth of the flesh is used to symbolize the Spirit regenerating the heart.

"What God hath *cleansed*, that call not thou common." (Acts xi. 9.) "*Purify* their hearts by faith." (Acts xv. 9.) "Arise and be baptized, and *wash* away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts xxii. 16.) "*Purifying* unto himself a peculiar people." (Titus ii. 14.) "That he might sanctify and *cleanse* it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 26.) "By the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,

which he shed on us abundantly." (Titus iii. 5.) "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." (Heb. x. 22.) "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iii. 21.)

The proof of the significance of baptism does not rest on a few disconnected expressions in the New Testament, but on the concurrent testimony of both dispensations. The two single passages relied on cannot override this; for Scripture is not to be set against Scripture, much less should there be an inference from an isolated word. There is no conflict; they fit beautifully into what is above quoted. They refer, not to Christ's burial, but to his death, and to the Christian's death to sin by the baptism of the heart foretold by the prophets. In the same sense, Paul, also, says:

"There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. iv. 4, 5.)

This is sometimes quoted in favor of immersion, but it has no reference to water;

for if there be "one baptism," and that with water, it would teach that there is no baptism with the Spirit, which baptism is the very thing that the apostle is urging. He has shown that the "one body" is the church (Ephesians i.), having access to God by "one Spirit" (Ephesians ii.), and salvation by faith in one Lord (Ephesians iii.); and then he sums up this in the words quoted.

There is one church of the living God, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. But this church, the body of Christ, is not in any mere earthly organization; it is the general assembly of the first born, they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; one Lord, not a physical being, but God eternal in the heavens; one faith, not earthly or material, but the house not made with hands; one baptism, not material, or of water, but spiritual, the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, of which the water baptism is the type.

The last supper commemorates Christ's death and atonement for sin; and if baptism does not signify the work of the Holy Spirit,

then he has no witness, and both the ordinances refer to Christ. It is incredible that the Saviour appointed two ordinances so different in form to represent his own work, ignoring the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead, the same in substance, equal in glory, with the Father and the Son; sin against him is never forgiven; the use of water in the old economy typified his work, and in the new he is the active agent in regeneration, of which baptism is the seal.

"Under the ancient dispensation the rites were divided into two great classes, namely, those significant of purity or purification, and those significant of atonement for sin. . . . . The work of the Spirit is still symbolized under the gospel, and a Saviour's blood is still represented. That the one baptism signifies the other is plainly indicated by the Lord's supper."—*Professor Stuart.*

The outpouring of the Spirit foretold in the Old Testament is identified in the New as the baptism with the Spirit, and the statements that the Spirit "*descended*," *sat*, or *fell*, or was *shed forth*, or *poured out*, are Bible pictures from the Master himself to show the mode of this baptism and the fulfilment

of the prophecies. The baptism with water is another picture ordained by him to represent this baptism with the Spirit; and to be true to the thing represented it cannot be in a different mode.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EVIDENCE SUMMED UP.

THE question is: was our Lord's person buried in the water when baptized, or did the water descend on him by affusion?

This question we are to determine according to the weight of the evidence under these principles:

(1), Absolute certainty is not required; what is most reasonable is accepted.

(2), Words are read in the light of the circumstances of the parties; effect is given to the sense in which they are used by the writer; inferences not in his mind are disregarded.

(3), The meaning of a writing is determined, not from isolated phrases, but from the whole instrument and its general purpose.

To bring out the application of these rules more clearly, let us set the evidence on each side in two parallel columns.

FOR IMMERSION.	FOR AFFUSION.
1. The use of the prepositions *in*, *into* and *out of*.	1. Prophecy and its fulfilment.
2. John's baptizing at	2. The character of John.

FOR IMMERSION.	FOR AFFUSION.
Aenon because much water was there.	3. The purpose of Christ's baptism.
3. Burial with Christ by baptism.	4. The situation of the apostles.
4. The meaning of *baptizo*.	5. The significance of baptism.

As we have seen, all the points in the left column are mere presumptions. The first three rest entirely on the English version, and are not warranted by the Greek or intended by the translators. But waiving this, what have we? Christ's coming out of the water when baptized, and John's baptizing at the Jordan, and at Aenon because there was much water there, would only raise a presumption that John baptized by immersion, and the recorded facts neutralize this presumption. To baptize the great multitude that came forth to him, John, since he could only use running or clean water, would naturally stand at the edge of the stream and dip in his hyssop bush and sprinkle the people as they passed him; and he could not possibly have kept all these people together without a supply of water. This was under the old dispensation. The baptism of the

eunuch by Philip was at the dawn of the new, when Jewish ordinances still tightly bound the church, and before the vision to admit the Gentiles had been given; so they both being Jews, on a desert road, to follow the Jewish mode and use running water, would naturally go to it. The point in these passages is the fulfillment of the prophecies, and to know what they really did we must look not to some ambiguous words, but to the mode then in use, what they said at the time, and the Scriptures they were fulfilling.

As to burial with Christ by baptism, if we had only the two verses in which the expression is used, there might be a presumption that it referred to the mode of baptism; still it would, on this alone, be an open question whether it referred to the *mode*, or the *effect*, of baptism; the momentary dipping a person in water is so unlike the permanent putting away expressed by the word *buried*, that such a figure could not be presumed of Paul; and when we read the context we see he refers only to the effect of the baptism that creates a clean heart.

As to the meaning of *baptizo*, it may be

presumed that a word is used by a writer in its classic sense, but this presumption always gives way where it appears that the writer did not, in fact, use the word in this sense; and it has no application when the word was not used in this sense by the people among whom the writer lived.

In every passage relied on for immersion it rests, not on the thought conveyed, but on the mere form of expression, and in every case the context is clear that the writer had in mind no reference to the mode of baptism. No other Bible doctrine is left to inference from the words used in a few isolated passages relating to other subjects. As against these four unreliable inferences, what have we on the other side? Is the proof for affusion equally uncertain, or are there any facts which God has set as standing monuments of the truth?

(1), When man by his fall lost communion with God, he promised a Redeemer, and as a perpetual memorial of this promise he made a peculiar people in whom this promise should be fulfilled. Among this people, ignorant and unlettered, and so unable often

to read his word, he ordained a ritual which should be an acted representation of his promised salvation, and so could be understood by all. The blood of the sacrificial lamb pointed to the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world; the "congregation of the Lord," to the great multitude "which no man could number," the sprinkled water of separation, to God's Spirit cleansing from all uncleanness. That it might be certainly known that Jesus is the Christ, God sent prophet after prophet hundreds of years before he came, foretelling how his ancient promises were to be fulfilled. They declared that before his coming his messenger would come in the spirit and power of Elias, who should *sprinkle* clean water upon them and *purify* the sons of Levi; and that God's Spirit should be freely poured out from on high. John came fulfilling these Scriptures, his baptism was by the Jews referred to them; he called the promised outpouring of the Spirit "baptism with the Spirit," comparing it to his baptism with water; this comparison is repeated time and again by Christ and his apostles, and it

is declared over and over that in this baptism the Spirit was poured out, fulfilling literally the prophecies. (2), The Jewish Scriptures did not teach immersion; baptism by affusion had been familiar to the Jews from the time their fathers were baptized unto Moses; John, a priest under these Scriptures, baptized without explanation, and the nation devoted to their sacred forms made no complaint that he was departing from the sacred law. (3), The sprinkling of water signifying separation from sin ran throughout this dispensation, and is held up by the prophets as a symbol of the Saviour; and though John felt he had need to be baptized of him, he baptized Jesus to fulfil the Scriptures; and the Spirit, the thing represented, descended on him. (4), The Christian church was organized by Jews among Jews zealous of the law; the gospel was preached first to the Jew, and then to the Greek; they relied on the old Scriptures as fulfilled in Jesus, "believing all things that were written in the law and the prophets"; they called the pouring out of the Spirit baptism; often referred to the old ceremonial, but made no

mention of a change, and none of the Jews who criticised them so severely ever charged them with making a change; they also called the old ceremonial baptism, and in a number of ways recognized its mode as still in force. (5), Under the law an unclean person could not come into the congregation of the Lord; his uncleanness was taken away by the sprinkling of clean water upon him, and when he was cleansed he could come in. This cleansing from uncleanness was the pith of John's baptism. He preached that the people should put aside their sins, and those confessing their sins he baptized, referring them at the time to the baptism with the Spirit Christ should give, and the same significance is in the subsequent record often given to the ordinance by Christ and his apostles.

In every passage relied on, affusion rests on the thought conveyed, rather than on the form of the words, and its foundation-stone is the unity of the Scriptures and the oneness of the plan of salvation. The Bible is a highly figurative work. It is rich in imagery, but in all its figures not one refers to immer-

sion; while in both Testaments the falling showers, the flowing fountain, the water pouring from the hyssop, and the sprinkled ashes in water, are used time and again to symbolize the baptism with the Spirit. Not only so, but as against two baptisms where one statement looks toward immersion, we have numberless baptisms where it is utterly unreasonable, households baptized at private houses, a multitude of men and women at Jerusalem, and numbers at a jail, in Samaria, or wherever the parties happened to be. As against the use of the word *buried*, we have the same writer also using the word *sprinkled* and *poured out* or *shed forth*, and the fact that he lived after the most straitest sect a Pharisee, and was baptized at a private house, standing up. And as against a common classic use of *baptizo* by no means universal, we have its use in the sense of cleanse in the Septuagint, Josephus, and in every place in the New Testament where it does not refer to Christian baptism; when first mentioned we have John illustrating its meaning by the comparison of a fan purging a threshing floor, and the Jews at the time, and the apostles after-

wards, recognizing him as fulfilling the ancient promises of a great cleansing of the people before the coming of the Lord. The primary object of prophecy, and all the Old Testament ceremonials, was to point to the new dispensation. If the ceremonial sprinklings of water under the Old Testament do not point to Christian baptism, or the work of the Spirit which it symbolizes, what is their significance? Our Saviour's life and character, and the establishment of the gospel, are foretold to the smallest details, and if immersion has any place in the new dispensation, it is the one subject on which the voice of prophecy was silent, and of which there was no type in any of the old ceremonials.

Apply now our principles. Certainty is not attainable. It is possible John baptized in a manner not foretold by the Scriptures, which he relied on as his credentials, or that Philip illustrated to the eunuch Isaiah's meaning in a manner not referred to by the prophet, or that there was an unusual supply of water at Jerusalem, in the desert or wherever needed · but such things cannot

be believed without proof. The question is, what is most reasonable? (Rule 1.) Words are very misleading unless read in the light of the circumstances under which they were used; little weight can be attached to inferences from expressions used here and there, where the context shows another matter was in the mind of the writer; and if these expressions can be construed in more than one way, that construction must be adopted which will harmonize the whole instrument. The prepositions translated *in*, *out of*, and *into*, in two or three passages, being in fact translated *at*, *from*, and *to*, in hundreds of other passages, we are not to determine any Bible doctrine by guessing in which sense the writer used them in a particular passage; but to know what certain Jews did, we should look to the Old Testament for the Jewish practice and the purpose in view at the time. (Rule 2.) The word "much," in one passage of our version, and "buried," in two others, may support an inference not intended in the original, but the general purpose and meaning of the entire instrument is shown in many ways, and is not so easily misunder-

stood. There is no break between the Old Testament and the New; no change of purpose or shifting of plan; the New only unfolds how God kept his everlasting covenant with his people. So, like other writings, the Bible must be regarded as a whole, and its meaning discovered, not from the form of disconnected phrases, but from the thought and general intent of the entire revelation. (Rule 3.)

Under these principles all the points in the left column fade away, and leave alone those in the right column for our guidance. What could the burial of Christ's body in the water have represented to the Jews who witnessed his baptism? How could his baptism, if a burial in water, have been the culmination of the outpourings of the Mosaic ceremonials? Or in what sense could it then be likened to the baptism with the Spirit which Christ shed forth, or poured out freely? How would this have fulfilled anything the prophets had spoken concerning him, or what symmetry or unity of plan is there on this supposition between the two Testaments? John being a priest under the

law would be presumed to baptize as directed by it, with a hyssop bush dipped in running water. The pouring of the water from the bush is the very thing referred to in the prophets, and would aptly symbolize God's Spirit poured out freely for the cleansing of the world. This makes the two Testaments a harmonious whole, without change of purpose or plan, and reconciles all the facts recorded in the New Testament. The circumstances stand about it, sustaining it like a stone wall.

To illustrate the superiority of positive facts over verbal inferences, take a case in court. A tract of land in Pennsylvania is in issue; the title to it depends on whether William Penn, many years ago, held it in fee as his own, or as a servant of Lord Baltimore; the jury is sworn and the plaintiff introduces his evidence. He claims that the property was held as servant, and to show this introduces an English version of an old French record, containing several expressions from which a holding as servant might be inferred; thus it reads that (1), Penn derived

his rights from Baltimore*; (2), he was summoned to him once when much force was needed†; (3), he was buried in his interests‡; (4), he served him§; and it is insisted that the word translated *serve*, being derived from the Latin *servus*, a slave, originally meant to be a slave or servant. But from the original record, which is produced, it appears that the writer in making it did not have in mind the relations between Penn and Lord Baltimore; that the above expressions may also be translated thus: (1) Penn derived his authority like Lord Baltimore*; (2), he was summoned by him once when many men met†; (3), he was interested in his affairs‡; (4), he served him as a friend§; that the terms are so used in other parts of the record; that little regard is given in it to the strict use of words, much of it being written by simple fishermen who wrote as they talked; and that the word translated *serve* had long had other meanings than to be a slave.

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*See above, pp. 14–20.
†See above, pp. 19–19.
‡See above, pp. 22–32.
§See above, pp. 32–45.

The defendant then proves these facts: (1), William Penn entered under the will of the former owner, which devised the property to him in his own right, and he afterwards declared that not many days hence he would pass the property in like manner, which he did.* (2), It was the executor of this will who put Penn in possession, and he then referred to it as his authority.† (3), The purpose of Penn's holding the property was to carry out this will.‡ (4), The Penns were proverbially proud, and to be a servant was not customary with them, yet there was no complaint of William for this, but, on the contrary, his followers often referred to his having fulfilled in every respect the family law. Their purpose at the time was to conform to an older record in which serving was unknown, and in a number of ways the old custom was recognized as in force.§ (5), The holding of the property as his own was an outward fact to represent certain invisible rights which a holding as servant would not have repre-

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*See above, pp. 46–53.
†See above, pp. 53–60.
‡See above, pp. 60–64.
§See above, pp. 64–75.

sented.* The older record included the will referred to, but was incomplete, and the record read by plaintiff was made expressly to complete it, the two together constituting one whole made by the same authority, to carry out a fixed plan formed long before; and to adopt the plaintiff's construction of it would destroy its harmony as a whole, and make much of the older record meaningless.

The judge after this sums up the evidence, pointing out the superiority of such circumstances over vague inferences from words not intended by the writer. What will the verdict of the jury be? What would be your verdict if on the jury?

So it is, that after several centuries of agitation, ninety-seven per cent. of the Christian church remains Pedobaptist, and that immersionists make so many arguments on matters outside of the Bible. Here lies the real strength of their case. Immersion is not in the Bible, but in the traditions of men it has always had a strong hold, for Peter expressed truly the human heart when he

*See above, pp. 75–84.

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said to Christ: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." And Christ meant to rebuke this very notion in his reply to Peter: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet [any part], but is clean every whit." (John xiii. 9, 10.)

CHAPTER V.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF IMMERSION.

BESIDES all this, there are several objections to immersion which should not be overlooked. A tree is known by its fruits. False premises lead to false conclusions. If the conclusions to which immersion leads are false, it is a strong argument against its truth.

No construction of Scripture is sound which makes it conflict with nature, for there is no contradiction between nature and nature's God. The Christian religion was intended for all climates and all people; but in many parts of the globe, from desert or cold, and with many persons, from infirmity or age, immersion is impossible. Christ knew all things; he came as the Saviour of all men; yet we are told that he ordained as the seal of his kingdom on earth a thing that is impossible most of the year in the larger part of three out of its five zones, and is at all times wholly unsuitable to the sick and

the aged, to whom the means of grace are most precious!

Immersion not only rejects the Greek lexicons, but it assails the integrity of the Scriptures, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the unity of the church.

The Disciples positively declare that the New Testament, not the Bible, is their creed, and deny the authority of the Old Testament. The Baptists, in theory, do not go so far; but quote to many of them the Old Testament on any point, and they will answer you, "What does the New Testament say? That is what we go by." The reason for this disregard of the old Testament is that they are forced to take this position to meet the crushing argument from it against immersion. Not so answered Christ and his apostles. He commanded people to search these Scriptures, saying that he came not to destroy, but to fulfil them. (John v. 39; Matt. v. 17, 19.) The apostles everywhere appealed to them as the charter of Christianity. Read any of the early standards of the church, and then the writings of the average immersionist, and mark the difference in tone

toward the Old Testament. With one, the Old Testament is the living word of God; with the other, a venerable document, persuasive as a kind of commentary on the New, but of little real authority. As a result, in the South and West especially, we have a widespread neglect of the Old Testament, and a door opened for the neglect of the New; for one can no more live without the other than the hands or feet without the stomach. The whole of the Scripture must be studied together. The two Testaments are so associated that a knowledge of one is impossible without the other. The Old Testament is often unmeaning without the New, which gives the substance of which the Old gives the shadow; and the New, in much of its teachings and allusions, is equally misunderstood without the Old, for it was not written as an independent work, but to complete what Moses and the prophets had begun. So any view of the Scripture which leaves out either Testament must be defective. The Bible is one whole; all its parts fit together like mosaic; and no sect, to sustain its position, should undervalue any part of it, or teach men so to do.

To sustain the "liquid grave," immersionists are forced to deny the Bible significance of baptism as typifying the work of the Holy Spirit; and to do this, they often deny the baptism with the Spirit, or reject the work of the Spirit altogether. This is the logical result of their principles and the arguments used to sustain them; for, if the essential idea of the ordinance is burial, how can the *outpouring* of the Spirit be a baptism? And if men are saved by immersion in water, what work is left for the Spirit? If there is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism, and if this one baptism is immersion in water, how can there be a baptism with the Spirit? This is also the natural consequence of their contention, because the more any rite is exalted the more vital piety is depreciated. When people are taught to attach undue importance to any rite, they, of necessity, come, more or less, to rely on this rite, and not wholly on the work of God's Spirit within the man regenerating the heart. So, many who do not in terms deny the work of the Spirit depend, perhaps unconsciously, on the mode of their baptism, and, from hearing so much stress

put on it, give to this mere form honor due only to God's Spirit. The Bible is his work; the Spirit is its life; and no view of it can be sound which belittles or ignores its spiritual meaning.

If people understood that there is no efficacy in any mode of baptism, all interest in the subject would cease, hence to uphold immersion it is insisted either that it is essential to salvation, or that nobody can belong to the visible church unless immersed. The Disciples usually maintain that immersion is essential to salvation. Their position is stated by them as follows:

"We are baptized into Christ. Nothing but immersion is baptism; therefore all unimmersed persons are out of Christ."—*Gospel Advocate.*

So they reject the name Campbellite or any other denominational name, and as there is in their view no other church, call themselves the Christian church. The Baptists say:

"We maintain that the Baptist Church is the church of Christ on earth."—*Dr. Smith.*

"Ours are the only churches, there is no second. The gulf between the churches of God and any

human organization of unbaptized persons is broad and deep."—*Western Recorder.*

The standards of the Baptist Church do not teach baptismal regeneration, or that baptism is essential to salvation, but the zeal with which a particular mode is urged, and the barbarities often practiced in the administration of the sacrament, show the real faith of many of its members to be in substance the same as the Disciples. This is the fair result of its principles, because if it is held that baptism does not typify the work of the Holy Spirit, to give such passages as those cited above* some meaning, many will naturally construe them as teaching baptismal regeneration, for if these passages do not mean that the water of baptism washing the body typifies the Holy Spirit cleansing the heart, what else can they mean except that our sins are in fact washed away by it? The Baptists practice close communion, the only justification of this is their claim that they are "the only church of Christ on earth," and that all other churches are mere "human

* See page 80–81.

organizations." This destroys the unity of the church, and what a spectacle Christianity would present if all her thousand sects so treated one another! Who in his heart believes that men are saved by a mere form, or that the Baptists are the only Christian church!

Many Baptists defend close communion with satisfaction on the plea that it is the logical result of their principles; but what shall we say of such principles? How different are the principles of the Master:

"Many that are first shall be last; and the last first." (Mark x. 31.) "And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us." (Luke ix. 49, 50.) "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." (Rom. xiv. 4.)

Immersionists forget that since the church began there never was a church that did not rest on the Scriptures as the foundation of its tenets; and that from the very beginning it was a favorite argument for a sect to assume to be the only church of Christ on earth, and

to deny salvation to all who disagreed with them. In the very first Christian controversies of which we have any record, these claims were freely made by either side to sustain its position. Later, the pope at Rome branded as a heretic the primate at Constantinople; the primate excommunicated the pope, and both denounced the great leaders of the Reformation and all who followed them. This spirit kindled the fires of the Inquisition, and is not dead yet, though it confines itself now to words and spiritual threats. The Roman Church still calls itself the sole church of Christ on earth through which alone men may be saved, and calls all Protestants heretics "to be damned." The Episcopal Church, returning in full vigor the compliments of the Roman See, declares itself the sole church of Christ on earth; denies that the church buildings of even other Protestants are churches at all, or that their clergy are ministers of Christ. Both of these claim to hold by apostolic succession the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and place great importance on the mere rituals of the church. But the Adventist insists that all

the above are without hope in the world, because they do not practice foot washing, or keep the seventh day of the week for Sunday; and the Dunkards declare all subjects of baptism unregenerate unless immersed three times, face downwards, in running water.

Many other examples might be given; for the history of the church is but the history of successive claims for this or that rite as the sum and substance of religion. The agitation about immersion rests on the principles which ritualism has always used to secure regard for its ceremonials. These claims are all zealously maintained by quotations from Scripture, and rest really on our weakness for forms. Man has an inherent love of rituals; they appeal to his pride, and he always wants something to bridge over the chasm between sinful self and a sinless God. Christ made but two sacraments for his church, baptism and the Lord's supper; and for about the first two centuries after his crucifixion no saving efficacy was attached to either; the writings of the ancient fathers during this period say little about them, or the mode

of celebrating them; but as piety declined, form was exalted, and in the third century the doctrine of baptismal regeneration got a foothold in the church; and, as it was held that men were regenerated by baptism, great stress was laid upon its form. The simple, apostolic plan of sprinkling was not formal or elaborate enough, and they established rigid rules for the performance of the rite, by which, under certain prescribed formulas, the candidate was immersed three times, naked. Several centuries later, those who denied the doctrine of the Trinity rejected triple immersion for this reason, and began to baptize by immersion as now practiced by the Baptists and Disciples; but both sides denied the validity of the ordinance unless the candidate, whether man or woman, was entirely naked; and both recognized the validity of clinic baptism, by sprinkling or pouring, provided the candidate was wholly naked. This last was by both parties regarded as the one thing needful, without which there could be no regeneration. But as intelligence advanced, and the Scriptures were better understood, the whole theory of

baptismal regeneration was abandoned, and with it all notions of the importance of any form in the administration of the ordinance.

So there was, also, great importance attached to the Lord's supper. The notion was entertained that the bread and wine were the very body and blood of Christ; that it was essential to salvation, and that he who had not eaten it could not be saved. The right of any to administer the sacrament, except the apostles and their successors, was denied; and so all not adhering to the church styling itself "apostolic" were branded by it as heretics and consigned to damnation. In our day the names have changed, but the spirit remains the same. Some insist on fermented, others, on unfermented wine for the communion; some, on episcopal consecration; others, on immersion, or foot-washing, or the keeping of the seventh day of the week, or triple immersion, naked or face downward, in running water, or on some other ecclesiastical ceremony, as the only means of salvation or of church membership.

It is a legal maxim that the law regards

substance, not form; and it has long been settled that mere form will be disregarded, and that the law will look through formal disguises at the substance of the transaction. Does the same principle hold in the divine law, or does he who is infinitely wise and just reverse the maxim of his creatures, and look only on form, disregarding substance? Does the salvation Christ died to bring to men depend on baptism, or this or that ritual, or does he look through these forms to the heart of the worshippers? Of course there are many good Christians in all these churches who readily answer this question in the negative, but there are also not a few who insist on the affirmative, and believe it a Christian duty to unchurch and pull down all other denominations. What answer, then, does the Bible give to the question?

Before the Levitical law was given, the religion of revelation was purely a spiritual worship of one God, without any prescribed form or ceremonial: "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." (Gen. iv. 4; Heb. xi. 4.) By faith Enoch "walked with God" (Gen. v. 2);

and by faith "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." (Gen. vi. 8.) Abraham "believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.) God said to Samuel that he "seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh on the outward appearance but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. xvi. 7.) So the wise man writes: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. iv. 23.)

The Levitical law prescribed an exact ritual to typify the promised Redeemer. This, in the course of time, was regarded as of saving efficacy; and the Pharisees, who were the church members of their day, thought they were better than others in God's sight, because of their strict observance of these things. But our Lord rebuked everywhere formalism, and taught with simplicity that salvation is not of ordinances:

"Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness." (Luke xi. 39.) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." (Matt. v. 6.) "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no

case enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 20.) "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Matt. vii. 19.) "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. xii. 50.) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. xxii. 37–40.) "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man." (Mark vii. 15.) "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." (Luke vii. 50.) "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3.) "Arise, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole." (Luke xvii. 19.) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John iii. 16.) "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." (John iv. 23.) "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." (John v. 24.) "And

this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life." (John vi. 40.)

Innumerable other quotations may be made. The distinguishing characteristic of the Gospels is that they deal, not with specific rules or forms, but with principles, and regard the heart, the motives and the spirit. On every page he who runs may read the purely spiritual nature of the new dispensation; so also read the prophets. (Isa. xxxv. 5, 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 27; Joel iii. 17, 21.) The Master taught not as the scribes; he looked beyond the letter of the law to the spirit that underlay it, treating the ritualism of the Pharisees with such withering scorn that the name passed into a mark of contempt. In his sermon on the mount, in which he unfolded his principles, baptism is not mentioned. When the Christian church was organized the only Scripture they had was the Old Testament. The Gospels and the Acts were not written or in general use for years after this. So John, Peter, and James, who seemed to be pillars, and Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision, wrote

letters to the infant churches to inform them of the nature of Christianity, and what was essential to it. These men had been commissioned to disciple all nations, and it was their duty to tell these disciples what was necessary. Paul wrote fourteen of these letters, John three, Peter two, and James one. If any rite or ceremony was essential, these apostles would certainly have explained it, because they wrote for the instruction of the churches who needed information. Yet, in all these letters, there is not a word of any rite or ceremony being important; on the contrary, Paul spends his strength in refuting such a notion, and in showing that salvation is free and without any condition, save acceptance of Christ in the heart. The idea that certain ceremonials were important had been advanced in the Galatian church, and the whole epistle to them is devoted to exposing this error. The same argument is made in the Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians, and is there summed up thus:

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth

the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. x. 8-13.) "For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works [any rite] lest any man should boast." (Eph. ii. 8, 9.)

This doctrine is the cardinal point of Paul's faith; it appears in all his epistles. James makes no reference to forms or ceremonies, and urges that Christians shall be doers of the word, and not hearers only. (James i. 27.) Peter, in both his epistles, writes, in substance, the same as James; and John presses the same points.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John i. 9.) "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1 John iii. 23.)

The silence of the New Testament on all ritualism is wonderful, considering that it was written by Jews accustomed to worship where everything was prescribed, from the priest's gown to the minutest offering. It contains no precise regulations for church government, no formulated creed, no liturgy, no form of worship; and so little is said about the form of the only sacraments enjoined that it can be plainly seen it was intentionally so written to prevent importance being attached to the external act. The New Testament is the work of eight different authors, most of them unlearned, far apart, and without consultation; yet none of them use a word or circumstance to lay any stress on either ordinance. Christianity was little understood, and the letters to the infant churches did not follow the Gospels as we have them now, but were, many of them, written first, and all before the Gospels were much circulated. In these letters, neither John, Peter, nor James names baptism at all, unless incidentally, and Paul names it only to refute the idea now advanced, that there was efficacy in the ordinance, and to

explain that preaching the gospel, not baptizing people, was of importance. He says:

"I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius. . . . For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." (1 Cor. i. 14, 17.)

Against this great weight of Scripture and its clear general purpose, immersionists rely, like all other ritualists, on the peculiar verbiage of this or that verse, insisting on the words rather than the sense, or often on mere inferences from the words, which are wholly out of keeping with the general sense of the passage as a whole. Like the Pharisees, they forget that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. Thus, as authority for their position, they cite one verse of Christ's interview with Nicodemus (John iii. 5), one clause of the great commission as given by Mark (Mark xvi. 17), one phrase from Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts ii. 38), and perhaps a few other like expressions. None of these passages justify any such conclusion; they are, in fact, distinctly against it.

The subject under discussion between

Christ and Nicodemus was not baptism, but the new birth. Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews and a Pharisee, trusting the forms of the law for salvation. (John iii. 1.) Christ said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (Verse 3.) Nicodemus treated this as referring to a physical second birth (verse 4), so the Lord explained: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (verse 5); that is, though Nicodemus was admitted to the kingdom on earth, and was cleansed according to the law (born of water), he could not be saved unless born again, or born of the Spirit (verse 5); for, to make his meaning clear, Jesus added: "That which is born of the flesh [physical act] is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (Verse 6.) Nicodemus was already impressed with the idea that certain forms would save him; and so Christ meant to teach him, not that baptism is necessary for salvation, but that mere forms cannot save. Those who understand the passage to refer to the necessity of water baptism make the same mistake as

Nicodemus. Our Lord's meaning is purely spiritual; he explains that himself. (Verses 6–8.) He referred to nothing more, for he rebuked Nicodemus for being a teacher of the Scripture and yet ignorant of "these things" (verse 10), and said, in conclusion, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (Verse 15.) The passage teaches simply the necessity of spiritual life in the heart, a thing that the Lord expected a master in Israel to know; it condemns the very principle which verse 5 is now cited to sustain.

So when our Lord appeared to the eleven, after his resurrection, and upbraided them with their *unbelief* (Mark xvi. 14), he added:

> "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

The subject of the passage is not baptism, but *unbelief*. In the verse quoted, belief or faith, which is elsewhere often declared the only condition of salvation, is put first, and condemnation follows, not want of baptism,

but unbelief. This sin of unbelief is elsewhere so condemned in the Scriptures:

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.) "Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith." (Rom. xi. 20.) "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. iii. 19.) "But the fearful, and unbelieving, . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Rev. xxi. 8.)

It is not to be inferred from the words, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," that he that is not baptized shall not be saved; for even in human law, penalties never arise by implication. To prevent this very implication, it is expressly added: "He that believeth not shall be damned"; and to go further and make other conditions of salvation is to add to the words of Scripture. That the disciples did not understand this to be Christ's meaning is plain also from the record of the other evangelists. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Luke xxiv. 47–49.) The

new birth is the central, underlying thought of the whole New Testament, and this spiritual change is never to be confused with physical things, or made dependent on them. In the expression, "He that believeth and is baptized," by an orientalism common in the Bible, baptism, the sign of confession of Christ, is used for the thing signified, and the meaning is the same as in other passages, thus:

"Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. x. 32, 33.) "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.)

So, too, of the second chapter of Acts. It is the account of the fulfillment of God's ancient promises to his people to pour out his Spirit upon them. (Vs. 16, 33.) Peter's statement in verse 38 is often quoted as if it read: "Be baptized for the remission of sins," etc. But this is not true; the first

word in the phrase is "repent." What Peter said is this:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 38, 39.)

The theme of the passage is the outpouring of the Spirit—the giving of the new heart promised by the prophets. It is an universal rule to put first that which is important. We know from numerous other passages that repentance is for the remission of sins, and that this was Peter's meaning we know, not only from the context, but expressly out of his own mouth. (Acts x. 43; 1 Peter i. 9–23.)

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts iii. 19.) "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts x. 43.) "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts xvi. 30, 31.) "Lord,

remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 42, 43.)

Thus we see that each of these passages, instead of exalting baptism, exalts the new birth or faith, fitting exactly in those above quoted, and the same is true of other expressions that may be cited. The Scriptures are their own interpreter; one passage does not contradict another, and the real meaning must be learned from the whole instrument, not the mere words of some verse here or there.

Let no man's heart be troubled with these things. The Creator's laws do not fall below those of his creatures in wisdom: "The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." (Isa. xxxv. 8.) Form is not preferred in his sight to substance. If salvation is dependent on any rite, then it is not simply of Christ and him crucified, but through some man administering this rite, and the door is open for self-righteousness, and the claim so zealously made by this or that priesthood that only through them can men

be admitted to the church of Christ. The two Christian sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper, stand on the same plane. Importance may as well be given to the mode of observing one as the other. The Spirit that ascribes efficacy to the mode of baptism is the same that insists on the bread and wine of the communion as the very body and blood of Christ saving the soul, or on the invalidity of the ordinance from the use of unfermented wine, or on a physical apostolic succession, or on some one sect alone being the church of Christ. It forgets the kingdom of God is not of this world, nor his thoughts as our thoughts, and is simply the prompting of the human heart to bring down Christ to things of sense and sight, and to look to them, not to him alone, for salvation. The commandment forbidding idolatry includes not only idols but rites; for there is no practical difference between ascribing power to help us on to God, to an idol, or a saint's bones, a crucifix or a rite. In either case it is something coming in between the creature and his Creator, and the only daysman between us and God is the man Christ

Jesus. If a man is not satisfied with the good old way, and is baptized in the mode he thinks right, let him not, like the Pharisee, think that he is thereby better than his neighbor, or that one mode rather than another will give him standing in God's sight.

In the dark ages, Rome, to secure her hold on men, taught the efficacy of her rituals to save the soul. At the Reformation this doctrine was repudiated and return made to the simplicity of believing. But in our day history repeats itself and a large section of protestants are returning to the Roman position of salvation by works, abandoning the principle of salvation by faith alone, for which their fathers died. No matter how often a man is immersed Baptists say he is not baptized unless immersed by a Baptist minister. This shows the real secret of their zeal. Their favorite plea is that all other denominations accept their baptism, or that Baptist baptism is good everywhere. But this is far from true. It is not accepted by a great many. In fact it is as a rule only accepted by those holding the form immate-

rial; and none of these regard Baptist baptism as better than any other unscriptural baptism. A fairer statement of the proposition would be that most protestants are more liberal than the Baptists, and recognizing all evangelical churches as churches of Christ, accept their sacraments as valid. The Presbyterian Church condemns immersion as unscriptural, holding that affusion is the apostolic mode; this view is as a rule maintained by the other pedobaptist churches, though some tolerate immersion to avoid the appearance of exalting mere form. They accept immersion as baptism on the ground that the Bible meaning of baptism is a "washing with water"* and that the use of an unscriptural mode of "washing with water" does not invalidate the ordinance; just as the use of unfermented wine or of leavened bread, or the mode of taking the elements would not vitiate the Lord's supper. It is a question of form, not substance.

The object of this paper is not to depreciate any church or sect, or to put one stone in its way. Christ did not intend all Chris-

*See *Shorter Catechism*, answer 94.

tians to be in one organization, for not one jot or title of his word can fail, and history shows the church cannot prosper in one organic whole. The divisions of the church are necessary, as in an army, for greater efficiency, and the Saviour's command is obeyed when brotherly love prevails among them, and all treat one another as fellow soldiers of the same great Captain. Let some be in the infantry, some in the cavalry, some in the artillery, some in the navy, but all in Christ. The notion that all should be in one physical body overlooks the spiritual character of Christ's kingdom, and is no less a desire for a kingdom on earth than the position of the Jews as to the promised Messias, or of the apostles when Christ had chosen them, or of the Roman pope, these many centuries. The union which Jesus requires is like the union between him and his Father, not in form, but in spirit, not a union of churches, but a unity of Christians. A united family need not all live under one roof, or engage in the same work, but they may live far apart, each following his separate business, if bound together in the cords of love.

Minorities are usually wrong, but sometimes right. As to the mode of baptism, the minority, however small, has precisely the same right to exercise individual judgment as the majority, however large; but when not a single passage of the Bible directly sustains its position, and all its proofs are disputed inferences that are at least doubtful, error bears its usual fruit when to sustain itself it attacks the integrity of God's word, ignores the work of his Spirit, ascribes saving efficacy to a mere rite and unchurches all other Christians. Christ taught that all men are brothers and his followers are slowly learning the brotherhood of Christians. We have in late years seen an Episcopal bishop resign his diocese because he communed with other Christians, and frequently Baptists are excommunicated for following as they honestly believe the commands of their Master rather than the traditions of men in this matter. A great many excuses are given for close communion, but the truth is, it is only a legacy to the present from the past. It is the fag end of the bitterness and strife that have so marred Christianity. Christians are learn-

ing that the welfare of Zion requires them to love one another, and that their strifes destroy their power. Prejudices die slowly, but a broad evangelistic spirit is spreading over the world. The first Bible and missionary societies are not yet a century old; slowly the old fires are going out, and let us hope that in our time yet:

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, and that the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."